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## CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN RADICALISM.<sup>1</sup>

VICTOR S. YARROS.

OLD, historic parties die hard, and old labels or tags long outlive their significance. For example, and not to go too far afield, take the American political parties. What does the Republican party stand for to-day, or the Democratic? What definite set of ideas and tendencies does an intelligent student of our history associate with the Republicanism or the Democracy of to-day? There are, as we know, Reactionary Republicans, Conservative Republicans, Liberal Republicans, and Progressive Republicans. There are Individualistic Republicans and Socialistic Republicans. The same bewildering "embarrassment of riches" characterizes the Democratic party. Mere accident often determines the position of party leaders on a vital question. What the party in power favors, the party in opposition is tempted to condemn. Consistency is not the besetting sin of any political party; but during a period of transition and realignment parties shift their ground and reverse themselves with astounding disregard of tradition and professed principles.

Now, if the American people could start afresh with a clean slate, politically speaking; if we could regroup and reclassify ourselves with reference to the major and vital issue of our time, there is hardly room for doubt that three

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<sup>1</sup> An address delivered before the Sociology Club of the University of Chicago and the Chicago Literary Club.

great parties would emerge—the Conservative party, the Liberal, and the Radical. Within each of these there would be subdivisions, of course. But there would be no Reactionary party, since no rational person cares to describe himself seriously as a Reactionary.

The classification and nomenclature suggested is familiar in Europe, and would be natural, intelligible and scientific in the United States. It is a fact that when we become politically conscious; when we settle down, as it were, and begin to think for ourselves, and to play an active part in life, we find that we are either conservative, liberal or radical in our ideas and sympathies. We take sides and know “where we belong.”

As realists in politics, as careful thinkers, let us ask ourselves what constitutes American radicalism at this juncture. What distinguishes an American Radical from an American Liberal, or from an American Conservative? Is there an actual basis for radicalism in America, or is our radicalism essentially exotic, alien, artificial, and therefore negligible?

It may be worth while to pause for a moment to consider the notion that there is really no such thing as American radicalism, and that all our Radicals are “invaders” and strangers, as their foreign names indicate. What, one wonders, would happen to American radicalism if most of the unnaturalized or unassimilated foreign Radicals were deported or imprisoned? Would the whole radical movement collapse? As a matter of fact, there would be a radical movement in the country to-day if immigration had been totally suspended fifty years ago. America has always had her Radicals. Jefferson and Paine were Radicals in their day. Emerson and Thoreau were Radicals of a later period. The Brook Farm idealists were Radicals. Henry George was a Radical. So was Edward Bellamy. The leading Communists and Socialists and Syndicalists in America to-day are natives, not aliens. Glance at the names: Debs, Haywood, Eastman, Russell, Sinclair, Nearing, Lloyd, Walling, Steadman, Laidler. The editors and

chief contributors of the radical weeklies and monthlies of America are Americans, not aliens. Our advanced "Liberal" organs of opinion would be called radical in Europe, where philosophical radicalism has never been a byword or reproach, and the name would not be repudiated, but proudly borne.

A little inquiry would show that the American Radicals have never been greatly influenced by alien agitators living among us. American thinkers have been influenced, naturally and inevitably, by the great schools of radical thought in Europe—Fourierism, Christian Socialism, Scientific Socialism of the Marx type, Fabian and Opportunist Socialism, Guild Socialism. America's problems are different in degree, not in kind, from European and Old World problems. Situations that are critical and acute in Europe are comparatively mild with us, but the drift is unmistakable, and coming events have been casting their shadows before them. We may still be able to prevent evils which Europe must remedy, but we enjoy no permanent or even lasting immunity from those evils.

Now, to start with a definition of a much-abused term. The newspapers have vulgarized the word "Radical." To them the Radical is a "Red," a violent and irrational enemy of the present social and economic order, a destructive element to be resisted and fought. I consult the dictionary and find a fairly satisfactory definition. Radical, says the dictionary, means pertaining to the root, fundamental, and, hence, in politics a Radical is he who advocates extreme measures. I beg to amend the second half of the sentence. A Radical is he who proposes fundamental, far-reaching measures.

We may object to the temper of certain Radicals, or to their methods, whether employed or merely favored in theory, but radicalism is not a matter of temper or even of method. There are Conservatives, or Reactionaries, whose temper and methods are offensive and dangerous. On the other hand, there are Radicals who personify sweet reasonableness itself in disposition and temper. Radicalism is a

matter of opinion, of doctrine, of outlook, philosophy, *Weltanschauung*.

In one sense, those who think at all on problems of moment tacitly claim to be Radicals. For who would admit that he is shallow, indolent, unwilling to go to the root of a situation and to favor a reform shown to be necessary and wise in the light of a searching study of that situation? We differ in our conclusions, in our formulas, in our remedies, but we do not, if we think earnestly and deeply, differ in our views concerning the approach to a difficult problem, the necessity of going to its root and satisfying ourselves that our solution is adequate, fundamental and as far-reaching as the problem itself.

The thoughtful Conservative stoutly denies that he is superficial or timid. He asserts that he *has* gone to the root of things, *has* carefully studied the problems of the time, and has satisfied himself that his solutions are the wisest and best. The Liberal will make like claims for his school or party. Both are sincere. It is only when we compare the respective positions of the Conservative, the Liberal and the Radical that we perceive that only the radical position is truly fundamental and far-reaching. The Conservative proposes one set of measures, the Liberal another, the Radical a third. If the Radical is right in his diagnosis and in his prescription, then the Conservative and the Liberal proposals are indeed insufficient and impotent—mere palliatives, if not quack remedies.

What, we may now ask, are the precise issues with reference to which we are called upon to take up definite positions, to make a choice of remedies? What are the problems for which we are bound to find solutions?

It will hardly be denied that the chief problem of our time is concerned with our economic system—with the production, distribution and exchange of commodities—while the problem next in importance and “burning” interest has to do with the political organization of society, or government in its several aspects. In other words, the institutions under special attack to-day are: Capitalism,

Competitive Industry, Private Property in the Means of Production, and the modern State, with its basic principles, its instrumentalities, its checks and balances, its methods of ascertaining and giving expression to the popular will, etc.

Let us take the economic question first. The essential features of the present system are well known. It is called capitalistic, because of the dominant rôle played in it by capital; because of the share of the product that goes to capital in the forms of rent, interest, dividends and profits, and because of the subordinate position occupied in it by the laborers and salaried persons who receive wages from their employers, the owners of the means of production. Is this system in the main just, socially beneficial, morally defensible? Is it practical? Does it work? Is the product of the united efforts of the capitalists, the managers and the employes fairly distributed? Is any one of the parties exploited, despoiled, oppressed, and, if so, which party? Is the present system better than that which it superseded and better than any alternative system now proposed? Does it need great, vital and fundamental changes, or only slight improvements?

The Conservative holds that the economic system is on the whole sound, just, workable and beneficial. He admits that it has defects, but argues that any human institution has defects, and that progress is largely a process of remedying defects in human institutions. Why urge radical changes when moderate improvements will answer—nay, when only moderate improvements are compatible with the perpetuity of the system? The Conservative does not defend the evils of the system; he merely declines to accept the cures recommended by the Radical. He has his own cures, and he believes them to be sufficient, not from any selfish point of view, but from the viewpoint of equity, reason and the common good.

The Liberal agrees with the Conservative in essentials, though he favors more important reforms than are found in the Conservative platform. Among conservative and

liberal remedies we may mention vocational training, good housing of the workers, thrift, profit-sharing, distributive co-operation, industrial councils, frank and cordial relations between employers and employed, prevention of profiteering, conciliation and arbitration, insurance against involuntary idleness, collective bargaining, and so on.

The American Radical is not opposed to such palliatives as these, but his attitude toward them is profoundly affected by his philosophical view of the economic problem. He claims to have first or guiding principles; he does not live from hand to mouth. He is an evolutionist, and is aware that the present system must change in response to altered and altering conditions of life and work, because *all* human institutions are the product of slow development, and nothing in them is necessarily permanent. He is satisfied that the economic system is becoming obsolete; that it answers less and less to the needs of society, alike from the standpoint of production and that of distribution. He believes that the system has become *fundamentally defective*.

To be concrete and specific, the Radical holds that competition must be largely replaced by co-operation; that the wage system must be replaced by co-partnership. These ideas do not make him a Socialist, nor a Communist, nor a Syndicalist. They do not, in other words, commit him to any particular *plan* of co-operation, and least of all to a plan that he can unhesitatingly declare to be worse than the present system. State or bureaucratic socialism, for example, is abhorrent to the sane and educated radical of independent views. State socialism is what Herbert Spencer called it, Slavery. It means industrial conscription, as Lenin and Trotzky have admitted and demonstrated, though they have the excuse of a war emergency. State socialism spells inefficiency, decreased production, want and all the conflicts and miseries that such conditions entail. But it is entirely possible to look forward to a co-operative commonwealth without accepting state socialism, the class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Co-operation may clearly be voluntary instead of com-

pulsory. It is conceivable that employers and managers may be persuaded, not by books, but by facts, that co-operation is more efficient than competition, and that more and better goods will be produced under co-partnership than the wage relation is capable of producing.

To the Radical it is clear that, in a scientific sense, the present industrial system is rapidly becoming impossible. The relations between employers and managers, on the one hand, and the wage-workers, on the other, and not in a few cases, the relations between the employers and the managers, are strained and unsatisfactory. Strikes and lockouts are wasteful even when they are justifiable. Many strikes are accompanied by violence and the destruction of property. Some labor unions believe in and practice sabotage in one form and another. Even moderate labor, when strongly organized, gives as little as it can for the wage received. Under the best circumstances labor is notoriously indifferent to the success of the enterprise which pays its wage. This strife and discord, moreover, in the industrial field are certain to increase instead of diminishing. For the propagandists of revolution are active, and it is certain that the working masses will be more and more disposed to follow the extreme faction among their leaders.

Can society afford the terrific waste that results from this strife? Many years ago Spencer, stanch individualist though he was, contrasted co-operative with capitalistic establishments and predicted the growth of the former at the expense of the latter under the law of the survival of the fittest. Other vigorous and uncompromising individualists have championed co-operation in the interest, not alone of the workers, but of the managers, and employers, and society at large. Can we wonder at this? We all talk about the magic of property. We realize the value of a stake in the country. We know that the ownership of a home, a farm, a bank account, makes, as a rule, for stability and conservatism. We point to the millions of independent cultivators of the soil in America, or in France,



and rightly say that these sturdy and thrifty men are not likely to fall under the influence of destructive radicalism. But what of the wage-workers who have no homes and no property? What of those who have little or nothing to lose from a social upheaval? Ferdinand Lassalle told the German proletariat that under capitalism "*Eigenthum ist Fremdthum geworden.*" That is, what should have been the property of millions has been alienated and transferred to the few. It is among the have-nots, the men and women who are without prospects, that revolutionary propaganda is most effective.

For the ills of industrial society there is no genuine remedy except the elimination of those features that make for antagonism, distrust, suspicion and apprehension. The employee must become his own master; he must be given a direct, immediate interest in the industry to which he gives his time and his physical and mental energy. In a world of big, consolidated establishments, of gigantic corporations this cannot be accomplished save by co-partnership and co-operation.

Now, if we recognize that natural evolution is tending to transform competitive industry into co-operative, a flood of light is at once thrown on a thousand and one burning questions. We cannot successfully fight the stream of evolution; we cannot resist the inevitable. Our plain interest and duty is to work with, instead of against, the forces of constructive progress. We must welcome the coming social order and facilitate its advent. We should not quarrel with trade unions as such, though we may object to gratuitous abuses by them. We should not oppose collective bargaining. We should encourage all rational experiments in profit-sharing, and in what has been called the peopleization of industry. - We should rejoice in industrial councils, direct and harmonious dealing between employers and employes, and all the suggested agencies for the redress of grievances and the prevention of strife, as steps in the right direction.

Even when labor is unreasonable, or, on the other hand,

when a group of employers is too rigid and stubborn, failing to meet labor half-way, those who comprehend the real nature of the great conflict are neither astonished nor disheartened. They are able to take a long, a historic view of the situation. They know that feudalism was not superseded by capitalism without struggles, losses and suffering. They will not expect the impossible of human nature in a period of difficult transition. They will be patient, for a social order is not transformed in a decade or even in a century. In the opinion of scientific economists, including Socialists, the process of establishing capitalism on the foundations of feudalism required about five hundred years, although even now capitalism is by no means in complete possession of the field. There are many feudal survivals in industry, as in government, even at this late day. There will be capitalist survivals long after the definitive establishment of a co-operative régime. What we are concerned with is the prevailing, the dominant principle, and this principle must be changed, is being changed.

In the co-operative régime, as in the capitalistic, three factors will, of course, be necessary to production—capital, labor and management. Yet the element of what is called by the Socialists and others exploitation—the Marxian “surplus value”—will disappear. Why? In the first place, there will be no such independent category as profits. To-day profits are, primarily, the wages of the employers who directly or indirectly run the industries. When the profit is moderate and reasonable, and the person who receives it really performs an important function in the enterprise that yields it, no objection can be raised against it on the score of justice even from the socialist point of view, though it is open to the Socialist to argue that co-operation would be more *efficient* than competition. Where the profit is inordinate, the objection to it is that it is not earned, and that he who gets it enjoys some anti-social monopoly or artificial advantage to which he is not entitled, and which enables him to plunder either the consumers, or his employees, or both. Under a co-operative system the

employees would also be the employers, and they could not rob themselves. (They might, of course, collectively plunder the consumers, and against this danger safeguards will have to be adopted by the Commonwealth as a whole, as Mr. Bertrand Russell, in his controversy with the Syndicalists and Guild Socialists, fully recognizes.)

In the second place, under a co-operative régime, Rent other than economic—that is, rent not due to natural inequalities in soil or location, but monopoly rent in its various forms—would disappear. No person or group would be permitted to own more land than he or it could cultivate or use industrially. The underlying principle of land tenure would be occupying ownership and use. Rent as a form of exploitation or tribute for the use of the soil would be abolished.

Lastly, there is interest on capital, paid as such to holders of bonds, notes and mortgages, or in the form of dividends to persons who invest in corporate stocks and become, in a sense, passive partners of the active owners and managers of the corporations. The mediaeval notion that interest is sinful because money is barren has long since been abandoned. Not even the socialistic schools contend that all interest is robbery, though, of course, if the state were the only employer of labor and the only owner of capital, there would be no room for interest—certainly not in the long run. Informed Radicals of the individualist schools distinguish between legitimate interest and monopoly-begotten interest. Under free conditions interest would continue to be paid, but only as compensation for risk and as a sort of premium to equalize the value of present goods and future goods. Rates of interest would still vary, but the factor of monopoly, of artificial stringency, would be eliminated. The decentralization and democratization of credit, exemplified by the federal reserve system and by the system of land banks, would be carried far enough to destroy the element of monopoly in the present system. Co-operative banks and other credit institutions would be encouraged by well-devised legislation. The metallic standard, a

relic of barbarism, would be supplanted by a multiple standard of value based on a variety of staple and essential commodities.

So much for the economic aspect of the radical movement. Turning to the political, what is the radical idea of proper social organization for the manifold purposes now served by the familiar forms of government?

It must be admitted that most radical schools have not faced the problem of government, or of the relation of the individual to the community, with any degree of candor or intelligence. The Utopian Socialists drew fanciful pictures of society and government, but avoided a discussion of first principles. The revolutionary Socialists, following Karl Marx, talked vaguely about overthrowing the capitalistic state, the tool of the dominant class, and establishing a genuinely popular and democratic government. The Syndicalists, realizing that the Marxian democratic commonwealth would be another state, with all the possibilities of tyranny and bigotry involved in the conception of the state, favor local, district and general federations of syndicates. Committees of workers would exercise all the powers of government, and in a great federal commonwealth there would be, presumably, a federal committee of workers to carry on the functions of a federal government. It is hardly necessary to point out the inadequacy of this formula. It does not contain any really definite idea. The writers who imagine that it does do not think; they only think that they think, to use a Spencerian expression. As to the Guild Socialists, they appear to contemplate two governments instead of one. They would retain some sort of a political government for certain purposes—defence, protection of consumers against extortion, etc.—and they would supplement it by a government of persons representing, not geographical areas, but industrial, vocational and professional groups. A joint committee of delegates from these two governing bodies would settle such differences as might arise between the political state and the industrial state. This joint committee would be a super-

legislature and perhaps also a super-executive and super-judiciary.

I do not think that there is any considerable group of educated American Radicals who have committed themselves seriously to any of these schemes of government. Yet there is widespread and growing dissatisfaction with the present political system, and the dissatisfaction would be keener and even more general than it is were not all political questions eclipsed by the economic and social issues of the period. It is assumed by many that a proper solution of the economic problems would necessarily embody a satisfactory solution of the political problem. The Marxian doctrine of Historic Materialism, or the economic interpretation of all history, is largely responsible for this notion. It is, however, superficial and baseless. Under *any* economic system the relations that are to exist between the individual and the community have to be carefully regulated and defined. Is the individual to be supreme, or the community, and if neither, as common sense at once suggests, then limits must be set to the respective spheres of both, compromises must be evolved, and ways of determining controversies over the boundaries of these spheres devised and provided.

The American Radical knows that the constitution of the United States was designed, as were the state constitutions, to limit the authority of the state, to guarantee to the individual certain basic rights—inalienable is the familiar term, though any sound student of history is aware that the term is part of obsolete political metaphysics—and to protect him against the tyranny and the intolerance of accidental majorities. The majority rules in the United States only within prescribed limits, and outside of these the individual is sovereign. The non-Socialist American Radical has no sympathy with the advocates of pure democracy or complete democracy who, either ignorantly or deliberately, would extend the control of the majority over minorities and individuals. Majority rule may be a necessary and expedient device, but the majority has no divine right to

govern. The aim and tendency of enlightened political radicalism should be to enlarge the sphere of the sovereign individual and further curtail that of the majority. The functions of government should be steadily reduced, rather than increased. As we advance toward a just and intelligent economic system the demand of the oppressed for governmental intervention in their behalf will grow fainter and fainter, while voluntary co-operation in a thousand directions will teach men and women to depend on themselves rather than on the state.

These propositions are, of course, general. Let us now apply them to concrete questions and ask which of the political tendencies of the day are in line with constructive radicalism.

The demand for proportional representation in all legislative bodies is a progressive demand. The cruder forms of democracy must make room for improved and refined forms. If we are to have government by discussion and mutual accommodation, all schools and shades of opinion—excepting only manifestly subversive or criminal opinions—must be represented in the legislative branch of the government. Every side should be assured of a hearing on every question of public policy. This is not only just to the groups that are now denied a hearing and representation, but it is necessary and useful to all other sides. Controversy often seems futile, but every thoughtful person of experience knows that free, honest and searching discussion helps him to clarify his own thoughts, and perceive flaws in his arguments, or weak spots in his position. There is not a school of any consequence that does not owe quite as much to its opponents and critics as it does to its own teachers and exponents. Hence, the more progressive and complex a community, the greater is its need for proportional representation.

The demand for the referendum and the initiative is progressive and constructive. The system of representative government has been tried long enough to demonstrate the need of safeguards, of checks and balances, suited to modern

conditions. Too often representatives fail to represent their constituencies, and democratic government breaks down. We cannot revert to the New England Town Meeting, of which philosophical historians like Fiske were so proud, but we can consult the electorate on important questions and thus preserve the benefits of the Town Meeting principle. It is the more important to adopt the new safeguards since, by common consent, some of the old and familiar checks and balances have ceased to work. The doctrine of the division of governmental powers is being abandoned. In city, in county, in state and even in federal affairs the recognized need is concentration of authority and responsibility. Commission government, city manager and commission government, executive budgets, consolidation of departments, are among the conspicuous reforms of the day. It is not an accident that these tendencies in government are accompanied by democratic tendencies exemplified by the referendum and initiative. Concentration in government is essential to efficiency and economy, but it has dangers of its own. We cannot allow small city commissions to grant franchises, for example, or incur bonded indebtedness without consulting the electorate. We submit constitutional amendments to the people. We submit charters to the people. Clearly, a general principle underlies these practices, but the application of the principle is haphazard and requires extension and systematization.

The demand for the recall, if limited to political and administrative officials, is sound and progressive. Public servants should be as amenable to discipline and correction, as subject to dismissal, as employes of private and semi-public corporations. It is idle to urge the application of business principles to public affairs, and then turn around and oppose the recall. It is idle to condemn spoils and graft in general terms and then refuse to enable the majority of the electorate to dismiss an official who practices these things for selfish, personal or factional aggrandizement. Private business, if well-managed, does not tol-

erate waste, inefficiency and disloyalty for a moment. Why should public business be compelled to wait years, or until the next election, to get rid of unfit and unfaithful servants?

The demand for modernization and reorganization of our second chambers, or senates, is at bottom a sound and progressive one. The Republican governor of Kansas who, some years ago, vigorously advocated commission rule for states, found little support for his idea, and we cannot wonder at this. The commission idea is dangerous in the field of general legislation. In this field more complicated machinery is requisite than in the administrative, if civil liberty is to be preserved and the popular will given adequate expression. Nor would it be wise to abolish the second or revising chamber. But to make it merely a smaller house of representatives, to deprive it of every distinctive feature, is to secure no advantage to the people save that of further delay, and delay is not always an advantage. The democratic spirit of the age is divesting the second chambers of the early attributes that made them different from the popular chambers. The hereditary principle is, of course, doomed. In America we have substituted direct for indirect election of United States senators, though we have not improved that chamber thereby, but, on the contrary, have made it easier for windbags and glib, plausible demagogues to get themselves elected to it. Now, there is a vital and useful idea in the Russian soviet system which, rationally applied, is capable of rehabilitating second chambers and assigning to them a really important part in the scheme of government. That idea—by no means Russian, by no means revolutionary, by no means even new—is that of what is called by radical organs functional or vocational democracy—a foolish, inept phrase, by the way—and which is merely representation of industrial and professional groups instead of representation of geographical units. The enthusiasm for the soviet idea—which, of course, is not necessarily bound up with communism—is rather childish, for it is certain to develop difficulties and weaknesses, but judiciously and fairly



applied, the soviet idea has possibilities of good. For example, one or two small nations, or some of our American states, might by suitable constitutional amendments provide that the second chamber, or Senate, shall be composed of representatives of definite social groups, occupations, industries and professions. A second chamber composed of farmers, manual workers, manufacturers, bankers, merchants, professional men, scientists and artists would be a soviet, but a soviet without the objectionable features of bolshevism. And it would afford instructive and interesting material for political science. Would such a chamber be more intelligent, more methodical, more efficient, more honest than one composed of representatives of geographical areas? Would it play politics, or would it do business in a businesslike way? Would it become an arena for open conflicts of interest, or would it learn to subordinate special interests to the common welfare?

The experiment certainly ought to be tried. It will be tried, I think. In France, President Millerand is said to favor a short step in the direction of sovietism. He has hinted at the desirability of having delegates from industrial and occupational groups participate in the election of senators as well as of the president of the republic. Why, indeed, should these duties be intrusted solely to officials?

In England, the land of sane compromise *par excellence*, it is proposed to organize local, regional and national industrial councils, which shall represent employers, managers and workmen alike, for the purpose of aiding Parliament in successfully solving economic and industrial problems. Such organizations would be advisory, but they would embody the soviet idea. Indeed, writers have called these industrial councils "Soviets, British style." Again, it has been proposed that the British House of Lords, a body largely shorn of power and bereft of all moral prestige, should be converted into a chamber composed of functional and occupational representatives. Would this not be an improvement on a purely political or anachronistic second chamber?

Here in America business men have often complained bitterly of the ignorance of business principles displayed by legislators. Has it not been said that we need more men of affairs, men who produce, transport, finance the wealth of the nation, men who have to think constructively and plan progressively, in our legislative assemblies?

All this is unquestionably true, but what the average business man fails to perceive is that the political system we are working under is, so to speak, stacked against him; that the professional politician, the good mixer, has a decided advantage over any other candidate, and that this advantage cannot be removed except by a change in the machinery and scheme of government.

Lack of time prevents the discussion of other political reforms, though the list is far from being exhausted. I come, finally, to the question of Public Utilities, or the services that are quasi-public in character and have been justly held to be subject to control and regulation by reason of the special privileges, or franchises, conferred upon them. Here is a question that is partly economic and partly political. How is it to be settled with justice to all interests? If the solution is to be neither socialistic nor reactionary, we have no choice but to adopt some form of the Trustee and Service at Cost Plan. We have heard of the Plumb Plan. It was offensively presented to the public, and accompanied by idle threats and ludicrous claims of overwhelming farmer-labor support which sensible persons knew to be false. Details of the plan, too, were justly criticised. But its distilled essence is simply this—management of public utilities by a body composed in equal parts of representatives of the managers, of the inferior employees and of the government or the general public. This body would have no police power. It would be guided by statutes. It would operate the utility not for profit, but for service, and at cost, capital receiving a fair return and labor a standard wage plus a reward of superior efficiency and fidelity.

The plan is not revolutionary, but evolutionary. It is

preferable to public operation and political management, which we are faced with, or to short-sighted speculative stock-jobbing management, which happily cannot be restored.

We know that we have not solved the Public Utilities problem. The Esch-Cummins Act is a makeshift—an intelligent makeshift, in my opinion, but still a makeshift. The moderate return allowed—5½ per cent on the aggregate value of railroad property—is limited to two years. The Interstate Commerce Commission is the real master of the railroads, and in addition there are forty-eight little masters, each powerful within its field. These masters are affected by political considerations. They may or they may not grant living rates. If they do not, serious embarrassment, if not insolvency, must follow. The issue of new or refunding railroad securities must be approved by a federal or state commission. Even the amount to be paid by a railroad to a banking firm for placing an issue has to be approved by an official body. Without control there is no real ownership; our railroads have lost control of their properties, and the tendency is toward even more and stricter regulation of them. Private ownership “on trial”? No. A mixed plan is on trial. In these circumstances the individualist Radical must cast about for an alternative to government ownership and control. The Trustee Plan, control by a directorate representative of the public, the investors, the managers and the employees, would seem to offer such an alternative.

Thus I submit that American conditions, American actualities, American problems pressing for solutions, have produced a species of radicalism that is genuinely American and that is at once scientific and practical. We have every reason to reject ideas that are Utopian, or alien, devoid of vital connection with American life. But to say that America needs no radical teaching at all is to imagine a vain thing. I am not one of those who complain that America is behind Europe in social legislation. We are better off than Europe. We have not the appalling misery,

the caste and class distinctions, the deep-rooted misunderstandings, the ancient abuses of Europe. But we are developing the same kinds of social and economic evils as have led to war and revolution in Europe. We are developing a tenant farmer class, a class of homeless and casual laborers. Another half century, with immigration at any liberal rate, with the development of a proletariat, with the exhaustion of cheap land, with the intensification of discontent and the spread of destructive radicalism, always the fruit of hatred and bitterness and pessimism, and our conditions may not differ perceptibly from those of Europe. Europe is dying, said Anatole France recently,—dying of spiritual and moral ills, for she is selfish, greedy, imperialistic and militarist, despite all the bitter lessons of the World War. I do not believe that Europe is dying, and if she were, the remedy would not be that which M. France prescribes, a sentimental, nebulous socialism. But certain it is that the civilization of Europe is sick, and that the same malady is attacking our American civilization, which is at bottom European. Certain it is that the remedy in Europe, and the preventive or ultimate remedy here, will be found in a sane, constructive, evolutionary radicalism based on the twin principles of civil individual liberty and equality of economic opportunity, good, healthy American principles, which, however, must be applied in the light of a philosophical interpretation of the facts and conditions of our own time.

VICTOR S. YARROS.

HULL-HOUSE, CHICAGO.